



THE ALEPH INSTITUTE

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February 1, 2024

The Honorable Paul G. Gardephe
United States District Judge
Southern District of New York
Thurgood Marshall United States Courthouse
40 Foley Square
New York, New York 10007

Re: ***United States v. Robert Wisnicki***
Case No. 22-CR-020 (PGG)

Dear Judge Gardephe:

With respect and deference to the Court, I write this letter on behalf of the Aleph Institute (“Aleph”) regarding Robert Wisnicki (“Dov”). In this letter, we wish to share the proposed reentry plan that we have developed for Dov that, we humbly submit, would further Dov’s rehabilitation and achieve optimal results for society. Aleph is ready and willing to assist Dov upon his release, and promises to do so to the best of our ability. Our primary areas of assistance will be focused on securing employment opportunities for Dov, and helping him navigate the various elements involved in reentering society. We are grateful for your consideration of this submission.

I. THE ALEPH INSTITUTE

Aleph was formed in 1981 at the direction of The Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, to provide support and rehabilitation to individuals enmeshed in the criminal justice and penal systems.¹ Aleph became a reality during a

¹ www.aleph-institute.org.



THE ALEPH INSTITUTE

meeting between Rabbi Sholom D. Lipskar and the Honorable late Jack Weinstein of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York. Judge Weinstein wrote the following about Aleph: “[T]he Aleph Institute, and [its] associates understand and force us to face the fact that each person deserves to be treated with respect as an individual personality and not as . . . a faceless number.”² Judge Weinstein continued, “[Aleph’s] assistance to defendants and their families provide standards of compassion and aid worthy of emulation . . . As a result of its good work, Aleph is widely known and respected by penal and judicial authorities.”

II. ROBERT (“DOV”) WISNICKI

Aleph’s proposed reentry plan for Dov consists of a program of community service and counseling. In addition, through its large network of private and nonprofit organizations, Aleph hopes to assist Dov in finding employment (that adheres to any probationary, regulatory, or other restrictions) upon his release. The same characteristics that have made Dov such a source of strength for his own family and community will ensure that his efforts have a strong positive impact for those with whom he interacts under the terms of our reentry proposal. In addition, Dov’s program of rehabilitation will include community support and reinforcement. We believe that Dov will be able to rehabilitate himself through these efforts, and that, in the process, he will push others to reach their full potential.

A. Community Service

1. Deterrence Classes

Dov has already shared his story by providing deterrence classes to colleagues, friends, business owners, as well as members of his community, describing his misconduct, and its consequences on himself, his family, and his community. Dov’s classes address the importance of making sure that all business activities are undertaken in strict compliance with the law. The presentation serves as a “cautionary tale” that helps deter others who may be tempted to follow a similar path of misconduct. Understandably, the process of “baring your soul” in public can be emotionally very challenging, but the punitive and rehabilitative effect on the individual, not to mention the benefit of general deterrence on others, can be very substantial.

² Hon. Jack B. Weinstein, Prison Need Not Be Mandatory: There Are Options Under the New U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, 1 JUDGE J. 16, 28 (1989).



THE ALEPH INSTITUTE

*As a rehabilitative component of his reentry plan, Dov intends to provide 12 deterrence speeches, one each month for a period of one year.*³

2. *The Bridge Multicultural and Advocacy Project*⁴

The Bridge Multicultural and Advocacy Center is a resource where all religions and ethnic groups can work together to address the needs of their communities, including education, poverty, and public safety. Since its inception, and with collaboration from diverse partners, The Bridge has hosted over 150 exhibits, musical celebrations, arts exhibits, as well as community educational forums. Most recently, with the dramatic increase in the homeless population which has been further exacerbated by the influx of asylum seekers into NYC, the Bridge was designated as one of six drop-off locations for donations of clothes and supplies to be distributed to various homeless shelters around the city.

Mark Meyer Appel, The Bridge's Founder and Executive Director, will accompany Dov to the Highland Park Brooklyn Sanctuary and various shelters in the city where he will get him acquainted with the facilities and find out their current needs (including clothing and other supplies like diapers and baby strollers). Dov will collect the necessary supplies, storing them in his garage, and then making deliveries to the six depots around NYC. ***Dov has committed to volunteering with The Bridge for 12 hours per week for one year, for a total of over 600 hours.***

B. Counseling

1. *Spiritual Counseling*

a. *Rabbi Moshe Weinberger*

Rabbi Moshe Weinberger serves as the Rabbi at Congregation Aish Kodesh Synagogue in Woodmere, New York, and as a mentor at Rabbi Isaac Elchonon Theological Seminary. He is the author of six volumes of Jewish Thought and *Halacha* (Jewish Law), and a frequent contributor to Jewish Action magazine. Rabbi Weinberger is aware of Dov's legal situation, and has committed to serving as Dov's spiritual mentor, meeting with him regularly (at least once each week) in order to oversee his spiritual growth, and to help him face the challenges he will encounter upon reentry. ***Dov's meetings with Rabbi Weinberger will focus on strict adherence***

³ A proposed schedule of Dov's deterrence speeches is attached hereto.

⁴ <https://www.thebridgemcp.org/>



THE ALEPH INSTITUTE

to the Laws of the Land, thereby ensuring that Dov remains on the straight and narrow path on his future journey.

b. Crime and Consequences Class

Aleph's weekly class entitled Crime and Consequences explores 3,000 years of Jewish history and wisdom addressing criminal conduct, sentencing, deterrence, and rehabilitation. The course is designed to challenge participants, using a "tough love" approach, encouraging very direct and specific discussion about the participants' offense behavior. These classes serve to instill a deep commitment to a higher power that dictates that we respect the law of the land and other people's property.

The course and conversation is heavily focused on individual remorse, introspection, and a commitment to growth and transformation. The classes encourage complete immersion and engagement in order to monitor the individual's progress as they come to realize the massive and damaging impact their actions have had on society, and how critical it is for them to recommit themselves to supporting morals and ethics in the world. Class discussion includes very practical applications of these teachings in everyday life, so they will have a direct application in the participants' lives rather than remaining abstract theories.

As part of his program of reentry and rehabilitation, Dov will attend Aleph's Crime and Consequences classes on a weekly basis.

2. Marriage and Family Therapy

The challenges and uncertainties arising from Dov's actions and his legal case have placed enormous stress upon Dov's relationship with his wife, Yonina. Rabbi Kass, MA, RSW, RMFT, a marriage therapist for 35 years, encourages communication and interaction to ensure healthy, happy, and long-lasting relationships. ***Dov and Yonina have agreed to receive therapy sessions from Rabbi Kass, so they can begin to heal from their past wounds, and learn to communicate as true partners who hold each other accountable.*** Together they will work on rebuilding a life of integrity, honesty, and harmony, and on becoming better parents to their five children.



THE ALEPH INSTITUTE

III. CONCLUSION

With the utmost respect and admiration for Your Honor's wise and compassionate decisions, I hope and pray that this submission will receive the consideration that will produce satisfactory results for society and for Dov.

With gratitude and prayerful wishes for all good.

Respectfully submitted,

Rabbi Yossi Bryski
Director of Alternative Sentencing
The Aleph Institute